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have been given in Harrow to the members of the P.N.E.U.; one by Mrs. Jerry Barrett, on "Ways of Learning to Draw," and the other by Miss Goodrich Freer, of the Women's Horticultural Society, on the training of women at Swanley by the above Society. Both lectures should have been far more largely attended than was the case, and those members who absented themselves missed a great deal. Mrs. Jerry Barrett remarked, in the course of her lecture, that the aim of true teaching is surely the helping the student by short cuts to arrive at the goal at which he is aiming, and that moreover too much detail is apt to interfere with the full idea of the subject. She went on to say that the great thing in teaching children is to lead them to form habits of observation, and then to encourage them to draw from memory. As regards Miss Goodrich Freer's address, it was a most refreshing thing to hear that the profession for which the college at Swanley is training women, is, as yet, not overstocked. The work there is so eminently healthy, that several London doctors have recommended it strongly for patients, and in many cases complete cures have been made. The college fees are not high and County Council Scholarships are obtainable for the course, and afterwards good appointments are secured by the students. The highest distinctions given by the Royal Horticultural Society have been taken this year by women at Swanley, one being the gold medal of the Society, won for the third time by a Swanley girl. Miss Goodrich Freer has kindly promised to come again and address the Harrow branch during the winter.

Eastbourne.—The autumn session will open in October, when Mrs. Steinthal will give the address, "Professions for Girls." November, Mdlle. Duriaux, "The Art of Teaching a Foreign Language." December, Herbert B. Garrod, Esq., "Co-education."

Reading.—A meeting of the Reading Branch was held on Friday, July 1st, at St. Clair, Tilehurst Road, by the kind invitation of Mrs. Pike. The chair was taken at 3.30 p.m., by the Rev. W. Neville, M.A., vicar of St. Mary's. A large number assembled to hear a lecture by Mr. W. G. De Burgh, M.A., entitled "Plato's Ideal of Education." The subject was handled in a most able and scholarly manner, and the lecturer was listened to with evident interest and enjoyment. The chairman, the Rev. F. J. Colson, and the hon. secretary afterwards made a few remarks on points suggested by the lecture. Mrs. Steinthal's lecture arranged for June 18th had to be unavoidably postponed.

Reading.—*Natural History Club.*—The fifth excursion of this season took place on July 16th. Over 130 members started in a steam launch, at 2.15, and went up the river from Caversham to the Hartslock woods. Having had leave kindly given by the owner, they landed and rambled among the woods, lead by J. Hawkins, Esq., and F. Tufnail, Esq. Several interesting plants and animals were found. After tea Mr. Tufnail kindly addressed the members on some methods of fertilization, illustrated by plants found during the afternoon. The journey back was much enjoyed, as there was a lovely sunset reflected in the water. The children were much interested in going through the locks.

THE
PARENTS' REVIEW
A MONTHLY MAGAZINE
OF HOME-TRAINING AND CULTURE.

"Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life."

HABIT AND CHARACTER.

By W. Boulting, L.R.C.P., Lond.

In order to deal with due emphasis, with the importance of habit in the formation of character, I must crave your indulgence if I first review, as succinctly as possible, the various aspects of *ME*, that "curiously compounded quintessence," which are necessary to a right understanding of the point of view which I incline to take in considering the matter. I can promise to bore you quite sufficiently before I reach the heart of the subject, but vision is all the clearer for theoretic conception. I will canter as easily as possible across certain fields of psychology and physiology and even of metaphysic, Bacon's "barren virgin dedicate to God," before I tackle the main object of this paper. For, as Bradley remarks in one of his quietly contemptuous phrases, "if we put ourselves to the trouble of thinking at all we should at least attempt to think correctly." We should try to achieve a due sense of the propriety, proportion and validity of our thinking. I am going to lay such emphasis on *body* as the bearer of habit that it is necessary that I should explain myself at such length as not to prejudice my position by laying myself open to an easy and wholly baseless charge of materialism.

For the common-sense man of the fields, and for his direction in the daily duties of his life, the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. For the astronomer in Greenwich observatory foretelling “eclipses and disasters in the sun,” the sun is a practically stationary body, and its apparent movement is due to a real revolution of the earth from west to east. Common sense is put on its trial and found wanting. Science is nothing but revised common sense. For Immanuel Kant in his study at Königsberg, or for our own Herbert Bradley in cloistered Oxford, the categories of thought used by the scientist are interrogated in their turn and put upon their trial. This “brave world” of the plough-boy and the complex manifold of science are alike found to be but appearance, the show, perhaps, of a fuller splendour into which our dim vision can penetrate but partly or not at all. Science finds daily experience to be a falsification of reality, and metaphysic weighs science and finds it wanting. Just as science is a criticism of common sense so metaphysic is a criticism or perception of the imperfect character of experience and an attempt at the revision and reorganization of both common sense and science.

Now allow me for a moment to digress in order to say that whether any further metaphysic is possible or not, it has achieved this absolutely undeniable and fruitful result. It is the general conviction of thinkers on these subjects that matter has no existence except as an object in thought. The brain may be the bearer of mind, but it only exists in mind. Whatever ultimate reality may be, it can only exist in conscious experience, though not necessarily included in finite experience. Divest a thing of all sensible qualities and there remains nothing at all. Spirit alone exists, and outside spirit there is no existence.

> “The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills, and the plains,
> Are not these, O soul, the vision of Him who reigns?
> The ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see,
> But if we could see and hear—this Vision—were it not He.”

There are then three stages in the evolution of our thought about things. There is first the view of the plain man—the common-sense view of our experience—the ordinary reflection of daily life. There is, secondly, the view of science—a reconstruction of our knowledge by experiment and inference into an organized whole. The point of view is changed. There is, thirdly, the criticism of the categories and methods of scientific thought, as well as of common sense. Once again the point of view is changed, and once again a Ptolemaic gives place to a Copernican conception. This third method does not concern you and me to-night. My reason for mentioning it is to utter a caveat against taking the materialism which is necessary for science as the last word in the analysis of mind. I at least am no believer in man as a mere quintessence of dust. For the plain common-sense man, he, himself, is *soul-body*. The mind is the directive force using the body as a machine, and helped or hampered by it. For science the *Me* is also *soul-body*, but science tries to see how far it can make body the real agent. The legitimate object of science is to become as materialistic as possible, and to explain all things as far as it can in the category of mechanism. One can only proceed and keep clear of irrelevancies, and so confusing issues by working in water-tight compartments of thought. Consequently, to-night, I shall try to be as materialistic, that is to say as scientific as possible, always begging you to be kind enough to remember that the categories of matter and energy fuse, and are transmuted into spiritual experience in the fierce crucible of dialectic thought. But our science even is very incomplete, and we have to supplement its gaps by common sense which still serves us, as the crude conception of the ploughboy about the rising and setting of the sun would be used by an astronomer without his watch and in a fix about the time of day.

Now the nervous system is the mechanism on which thought depends, and its essential plan is extremely simple. It is nothing but a collection of neural units, which communicate with each other. The representative unit consists of a sensitive plate or receiver, from which a nerve-path transmits the nerve impulse to a nerve cell, which recent investigation would seem to shew to be a nutritive apparatus or sort of Leyden jar or store-house. From the nerve-cell the stimulus proceeds down another nerve-path to a muscle which it causes to contract. All nervous energy is stimulated from the periphery by means of the sensitive plate, and however far it may traverse the total system, ultimately expends itself in activity, chiefly muscular. Hamlet brooding is none the less active, for you will find that all acts of attention are accompanied by tension of the muscles of the body, especially of the neck and face. The whole activity of the cerebro-spinal system is essentially reflex — an external stimulus transmitted by nerve-paths, usually to muscle, and transmuted into muscular contraction. We receive impressions in order that we may do work. The energy that comes from without returns to the world altered in character, but unquenched in power. I may say that this neural scheme represented by receiving sensitive plate, afferent pathway, store cell and efferent pathway with terminal contractile muscle is complicated indefinitely in the cerebro-spinal system, but proportionally to the complexity of the work that an animal has to do. In the development of the individual, nerve-paths are constructed out of undifferentiated neural material to the end that is required. When once a path is formed it becomes more and more easily traversable the more it is used, just as in the fields the beaten path, the more it is trodden the more it admits of swift and direct approach. Here then is the physical ground of *habit*. An action once performed becomes easier the second time, and the oftener it is performed the easier it is accomplished.

Perhaps in the lowest animals there is a certain amount of sentience accompanying the simplest action. There is a great deal of consciousness accompanying many acts in early childhood which become unconscious, reflex and instinctive in adult life. The infant has to think about his steps, the child has to think out his letters or his musical notes, the embryo-cyclist has to think about his balance. But we soon thread our way mechanically through the crowded streets; we read without conscious effort, thinking of the meaning and oblivious of the letters, or sometimes even without any consciousness of the meaning at all. We play without consciously attending to our notes. The "scorcher" does not think of his balance.

A French barber said to me, "I don't get tired by shaving, for my fingers go by a brain of their own which they have got." A great operator once remarked in my hearing, "I

do not use the newest improvements. I should not operate so well as with the old-fashioned accustomed instruments that have become the ends of my fingers." So that soul-body constantly tends to become body only.

Now as to the relation of mind to body two views are possible. The one in general acceptance among psychologists is that consciousness is the invariable concomitant of the processes of the upper nervous strata. According to this view men are practically conscious automata, and consciousness is an epiphenomenon. But it is possible to take another view. This hypothesis is taken from the strictly scientific and so far limited and uncritical field of theory, mark you, at a point where the conception of matter must be considered to be inadequate. Just as modes of motion are supposed to be transmitted through an attenuated form of matter known as the interstellar æther, which so far contradicts every known quality of matter, that while it is a useful peg to hang our facts upon it would seem to be very questionable whether it has any material existence other than in the heads of its scientific begetters; and nevertheless modes of motion in the sun *are* transmitted through space to our planet; so it is possible that modes of motion in the brain may be conducted from the brain through the medium of consciousness to the brain and body again. It is possible that science may come to regard consciousness as no mere concomitant or epiphenomenon of cerebral activity but as a mode of being by means of which matter responds to matter, just as matter responds to matter by means of that unknown existent which is called the æther. Consciousness would thus take its place within the circle of the conservation of energy, and serve to transmute certain efferent impulses into certain efferent activities of a peculiar character.

Be this as it may, one thing is very obvious, that consciousness of the same character tends to disappear when frequently repeated, so that the brain ultimately becomes capable of performing the same work without consciousness that it formerly did with consciousness. As Professor McDougall said at a recent meeting of the Aristotelian Society, "Take a motor car, and let us suppose that we notice that so long as it runs to and fro in the streets of its own suburb where it is well known and where the traffic speedily gets out of its way it does not whistle, but that whenever it goes out into streets where it has not been before and is therefore not known, then it whistles loud and long and has to choose the streets where it can get through most easily. And let us suppose that every time it passes again through these streets the traffic gets out of its way more readily and it whistles less and less until, when it has passed through these districts several times, it runs swiftly on without whistling and without deviating. I believe there is good reason for thinking that consciousness bears to the occurrence of neural processes a relation very similar to that between the whistling and the running of the motor car."

Conscious experience tends to become habit accompanied by less and less consciousness until the cerebro-spinal system does the work of consciousness without its aid. And if we could live long enough to become perfectly adapted to our environment, and if that environment were unchanging, we should probably end by becoming unconscious automata. For practical purposes we may regard consciousness as the *growing point* of the cerebro-spinal nervous system. What is done in consciousness tends to pass out of consciousness into nervous organization. What has been done once tends, so much the more as it is repeated the oftener, to become a king's high road and common or vulgar route of the higher centres. Through this easier route and beaten track the nerve currents of the future must perforce travel. Each easy pathway dominates and pre-arranges our future experience and activity. This is the really potent factor in determining our career. The direction of the growing point is the direction of the tree's growth; its healthy activity determines the health of the wood it forms as it grows, and again, on the health and direction of the wood depends the health and activity of the growing point. So, consciousness the growing point, whether it be neural or extra-neural in its real nature, determines nerve organization, and the nerve organization thus formed re-determines consciousness once more.

The circumstances, the activity, the quality of consciousness are eventually registered deeper than ever plummet sounded in the secretest recesses of our organization, and we become the slaves and obedient vassals of our own past. Each one of us is the product of his past. Who is there that does not

endure with Rossetti an untold pang in the merciless keenness of his self-laceration—

> "The lost days of my life until to-day!
> God knows the faces I shall see!
> Each one a murdered self, with low last breath—
> I am thyself, what hast thou done to me?
> And I, and I, thyself (lo! each one saith)
> And thou thyself to all eternity!"

Having thus dealt in some elementary measure with the physical basis of mind, the first remark that suggests itself to me is this. Seeing that our neural system is plastic indeed, but limited in quantity and losing its plasticity rapidly and receiving its direction more and more from the past as the years pass on, it is important that we should avoid as far as is possible waste of our building material in the education of the young. Beware how you use up the plastic force of the brain when that plastic force is at its best. Undoubtedly carefulness and precision in one study will tend to produce carefulness and precision in quite another study, whether this be due to a nerve induction, or to the switching on powers of the higher centres, if consciousness be merely an epiphenomenon, or to the direct response and reaction of mind to afferent by means of efferent resultants. An accurate and reflective Latinist will probably be fairly prepared by linguistic methods to become a careful and reflective scientist, or a discriminating critic of men and cities. But seeing that you are allowed by Nature all too short a time, not merely to educate a child into an intellectual athlete, capable of taking his place as a man among men, but also to furnish him with some technicon of useful knowledge, it would appear to me to be questionable whether some studies commonly pursued in the schools are not too costly of time and brain material, and whether the years devoted to the acquisition of "small Latin and less Greek" would not be more profitably employed in using up the available nerve-tissue to the registration in the brain of an order of knowledge which might train the powers not less, and yet be of much more ultimate ready service.

Secondly. Memory is physiological. The power of retaining fact is a personal equation. The natural endowment of memory in each individual is aided by one thing only and that is the actinic force of the association of ideas. No amount of mere repetition will serve to strengthen memory as a faculty. This is a fond illusion of the ordinary pedagogue, and ought to be relegated to the limbo wherein lie the illusions that the young bear is born formless and receives its shape from maternal lickings or any other of the Vulgar Errors controverted by Sir Thomas Browne. Learning “Mary had a little lamb” by heart may be an excellent end in itself, but it is valueless as a discipline of memory. It does not strengthen the memory-power the least in the world. There are idiots at Earlswood who will repeat an article from the Times after a first hearing, without understanding a single sentence, and there was Thomas Babington Macaulay who remembered everything (for the most part inaccurately). These be gifts indeed. They are exceptional endowments dependent on a physiological, that is to say, a cerebral aptitude. But the ordinary garden child has a poor faculty of memory for all that does not interest him, and the true way of cultivating his memory is to catch his interest while it is hot, as it were, to weld and fix it into a hook on to which, by the principle of association of ideas, other facts will naturally link themselves in the course of his mental development. We should try to fix centres of interest in every direction of his childish faculty, which shall serve as foci of crystallization serve to the accretion of structural mass; foci of fact that carry within them the principle of growth and development and produce a widespread interest in and power over life.

All knowledge comes in at the gateways of sensation, and the easiest gateway is sensation of pleasurable character. The sensations of a child are like the tender leaves of a sensitive plant, which expand in the sunshine and close at the least offer of violence. Excite interest and you will fix in memory; you will have introduced a foreign body into a supersaturated solution of attention. and the crystals which form therein will abide and continue to grow in all directions. Unpleasant work is a question of moral and not of intellectual training. Undoubtedly a child must be taught to face the unpleasant in his lessons, but a judicious teacher will graduate the task, and by a speedily fulfilled promise of interest, and by the power of his approbation he will soon be able to educate the pupil into a confident reliance in the ultimate delight of perfunctory work. He will form a habit. Chucking a puppy straightway into the water is the very worst method of teaching him to swim. It succeeds with exceptional animals only.

Thirdly. A mistake is the beginning of a habit—the commencement of an easy nerve-track. The fewer mistakes a child is allowed to make, the better and saner the habits of thought he will come to possess.

Fourthly. Nerve-roads cannot be well made—habits cannot be acquired, during fatigue. Children should never be fatigued if the teacher can help it. With adolescents fatigue may be a necessity of moral education, but with children the danger is that they will over-fatigue themselves if their interest is sufficiently aroused.

Fifthly. I said that nerve stimulation ends always in activity of some sort; but the intervening process is often prolonged, and there is always danger for some *children* even, of “thinking too precisely on the event and losing the name of action.” Too much day-dreaming is bad, because it is a perversion of the normal end of man, which is to build a brig like Thomas Carlyle's father, and not to chew the cud of reflection and spout it in bucketfuls, like S. T. Coleridge in his later years. In all education the practical side should be insisted on, and rigging a ship or mending a toy is in itself a better education for manhood and citizenship than Latin declensions or the dates of the Plantaganet Kings, which are acquisitions not usually unaccompanied by reverie. And the cultivation of the “fine feelings and the nice shades” of emotion without the constant opportunity and practice of their practical outcome in some deed, ends in our hugging the luxury of pity, while our unheeded brother falls starving at the gate. Jean Jacques Rousseau was dropping the gentle tear of sentiment while he consigned his children to the Public Foundling Hospital, Not reflection, nor emotion, nor acquisition, but action is the healthy outcome of the organism which is the bearer of mind, and to neglect or suppress this natural reflex current of life in the child is to deform its character as much as the Flat-head Indians deformed their children's skulls. Mere sentiment is like a tight boot that cripples and looks elegant. Mere sentiments are easily developed in the child, and your fine sentiments, as such, deserve the same objurgation as Sir Peter Teazle gave to those of Mr. Joseph Surface. No one will regret reading William James' treatment of this subject, in that great work of his, *The Principles of Psychology*, a work as brilliant as it is profound, always delightful, suggestive and clear, full of moral passion and never dull.

Sixth comes the difficult subject of the Relation of Habit to Will. The subject of will is so difficult that Professor Ward has said of it that we know of will, but will we do not know. Will is a distinguishable but inseparable aspect of consciousness. There is no faculty of will. All that we directly experience is essentially only a presentation of future possibility, followed by the act appropriate to its realisation. The greater part of the phenomena of will belong to body the bearer, and not to soul. We cannot will without attending, and the feeling of attention is a feeling and result of muscular contractions chiefly located in the neck, throat, chest, face and eyes. It is an afferent result and not an efferent initiation. Now all consciousness is primarily impulsive and lends to issue in speedy action. What we will depends on what idea, presented as possible in the future, dominates in our mind. The ideas which dominate are those which have become habitual, and the outward effects follow on the machinery in the brain. They follow at once in their urgency if we can mentally say " now." If one could live without having formed habits one would be in the very centre of indifference as regards the opposing claims of ideas to action. There could, indeed, be no presentation of idea as a future and possible fact. In certain diseases of the brain such as paralysis one may will and no action will follow. The afferent mechanism is sound, the efferent defective. That idea dominates which is strong enough to compel attention and to hold itself fast. Effort of attention is thus the essential in that aspect of the phenomena of consciousness which we call willing. And this is derived, as has been shewn in the psycho-physical laboratory, from a body state. The feeling of energy in willing, which is so often translated as a feeling of energizing, is always due to a current ascending up to consciousness and not to a current from consciousness which determines the act. But the power of the idea to dominate depends on the past history of the body-soul. " The essential achievement of the will when it is most voluntary is to attend to a difficult object and to hold it fast before the mind."

In order to develop the power of clinging hard to repugnant ideas, you may appeal to any motive you judge to be most suited to the particular child. You may appeal to personal pride, to self-interest, to love of approbation, to affection. You must assail the penetrable gate. In this regard, the means adopted, the motives appealed to, are unimportant. The essential thing is to teach the child to fix his attention on the difficult object ; all else may be left to the mechanism of body. Our ultimate object should be to teach a child to will deliberately. The habit of deliberation must be implanted deep in his nervous organization before passion and impulse can be quelled by the " cold shower bath of reason," and yield to an intrinsically repugnant resolve. For, as James truly observes, we are the " resultants of interests and associations whose strength and sequence are mechanically determined by their registrations in the structure of that physical mass the brain." He only is lord of his life who possesses the power of keeping an unwelcome idea fixed in his attention. He has become the man whose will is strong, who suffers but who will not suffer long.

But most of us become in adult life mere mechanisms, driven by the dead hand of our own past. We suspect and even know ourselves to be fools, we resolve and re-resolve, but die the same.

It is as hard to stay the driving wheel of a locomotive as to divert the fatal destiny of habit. Character is the sum total of habit. Just as the Alps are the sedimentary deposits that once settled quietly, day by day, from the silent seas of the past, so character is the sedimentary deposit of thousands of little acts and experiences in that past that is neither dead nor sleepeth. So the character of the man from whose act of will and " heroic example we drink new life," is a sedimentary deposit indeed, but elevated to a height like that of Goldsmith's imagined Alp—

> " As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
> Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm,
> Though round its breast the rolling clouds be spread,
> Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

Well is it for the child to whom deliberate volition is becoming a habit—is becoming his character.

Thus then I take habits to be, not the exchangeable possession of the man, but to possess the man; not the mere clothes that he can doff and don at pleasure, but the core of self, the deep fountains of volition. They are the successive deep layers of that organized body, that cryptic secret, of which mind is the integument and outer aspect. And so is the old adage true, "The child is father of the man." The body is no less than a marvellous temple capable of sacred or quite infernal import; and the nervous system can become a Holy of Holies or sink of impiety, whence issue the fiats of High Heaven or of the Nether Hell. The influences that play about adult life are storms that vex little or not at all the currents that move in the bosom of the deep. The conscious mind is chiefly the sport of the unconscious organization that is built up by years of habit; habit that has been formed as the valleys are formed by a subtle imperceptible and constant erosion. To parents and to educators the responsibility is great, greater than the heavy responsibilities of the surgeon or the judge. How desirable is it then that parents and teachers, who are usually sufficiently ready to yield a verbal assent to the Baconian proposition that "Custom is the chief magistrate of the human mind," should become aware of the fulness of the saying by knowing the scientific machinery by means of which the principle operates. Nor is it, to my mind, of vastly subordinate importance that they should at least learn to recognize that scientific explanation is, after all, merely our human means of prevision and pre-condition of wise action, but that it is not the ultimate fact, for there is no ultimate fact but that which is wholly and purely spirit.

SÉGUIN.

By T. G. Rooper, H.M.I.

Henry Taylor says, "The world knows nothing of its greatest men." At any rate while the educational world is ringing with the praise of Pestalozzi and Froebel, I am not sure that it is aware that there is another name worthy to be associated with these two master minds, and form a triad uniting the intellectual forces of Switzerland and Germany with that of France.

The name which I would associate with the names of Pestalozzi and Froebel is that of Séguin; and it is of Séguin that I propose to give some account, commencing with a short biography, and afterwards describing his famous experiment in training what he calls an Idiot Hand and an Idiot Eye.

In 1880, there died in New York, Edward Séguin, at the age of sixty-nine, a man who on account of his life-long devotion to the science and art of restoring, or at least elevating in the scale of living beings, children wholly or partially imbecile and children of feeble intellect, well deserves to have his name recorded in the Liber Aureus reserved for the few men whose lives have been of great service to all the human race, without being the cause of the least harm to any part of it.

Séguin was born in Burgundy, in 1812, and came of a family of physicians of good standing and repute. He had a long line of ancestors who, for many generations, took a leading place as physicians in the Department of La Nièvre. After receiving a complete education (in this respect very unlike Froebel with his want of education) at the College of Auxerre, and then in the Lycée St. Louis at Paris, he studied medicine under a famous master of the subject, known as Itard, and also under Esquirol, the psychologist and "aliéniste" (Mad-doctor). Both Itard and Esquirol were profoundly interested in psychological studies, and Séguin had an opportunity of watching the apparently unsuccessful efforts of Itard to develop the mental powers of an idiot